

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 28 are pending, with Claims 1, 16, 27, and 28 being independent. Claims 1 and 16 have been amended. Claims 27 and 28 have been added.

Claims 1 through 26 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Figs. 15A through 15C of the subject application in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,682,559 (Yoshino, et al.) taken alone or in further view of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,404,152 (Nagai), 4,994,843 (Kitazawa), 4,520,240 (Swindler), 5,392,088 (Abe, et al.), and 5,895,130 (Saito, et al.). All rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 27 recite, inter alia, (a) a focus controller that focuses on the determined main object area (determined out of the areas grouped) using information of the focus map, in combination with (b) maintaining a focus condition until it has been determined that the operation member has been operated to set as a new main object area one of the object areas and then causes the focus controller to focus on the new main object area using information of the focus map.

Claims 16 and 28 recite, inter alia, (a) focusing on the main object area (determined out of the areas grouped) using information of the focus map, in combination with (b) maintaining a focus condition on the determined main object area until it has been determined that the operation has been operated, with changing to focus on the new main object area using information of the focus map when the main object area is changed.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that none of Figs. 15A through 15C, Yoshino, et al., Nagai, Kitazawa, Swindler, Abe, et al., and Saito, et al., even in the proposed combinations, assuming, arguendo, that such could be combined, discloses or suggests at least

the above-discussed combinations of claimed features as recited, inter alia, in Claims 1, 16, 27, and 28.

The Official Action acknowledges that 15A through 15C are silent as to changing the object area, and therefore relies upon Yoshino, et al. Applicants respectfully submit that Yoshino, et al. shows, e.g., in Fig. 7, that focus detection is performed, and next it is determined whether or not the detection area for performing focus detection has been changed, and if so (step #360), then detection is performed once again using the selected area (step #380), which Applicants respectfully submit provides neither a description nor a suggestion of the above-discussed combinations of features including, inter alia, performing “focus on the new main object area using information of the focus map”.

Applicants respectfully note that Kitazawa shows, e.g., an object distance measuring area selecting switch 42; however, Applicants respectfully submit that such provides neither a description nor a suggestion of at least the above-discussed claimed combinations of claimed features.

The Official Action relies upon UP/DOWN dial 36 of Saito, et al. Applicants respectfully submit that said dial is for increasing or decreasing the value of object distance, and provides neither a description nor a suggestion of the above-discussed claimed features.

It is further respectfully submitted that there has been no showing of any indication of motivation in the cited documents that would lead one having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the above-discussed claimed features.

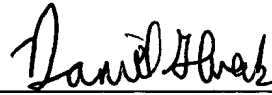
The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed

above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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